

Great Stone-plover *Esacus recurvirostris* (Cuvier, 1829) at Madayipara, Kannur district, Kerala.

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At Madayipara, a flat, laterite topped hillock near Pazhayangadi, about 21 km north of Kannur, a number of over-summering migratory shorebirds are seen during the monsoons. Groups of sandpipers, stints, Redshanks and several species of sandpipers feed in and around the shallow rainwater pools. The place hosts a good population of resident Red-wattled and Yellow-wattled lapwings and occasionally, the elusive Stone-Curlews also could be observed.

On 21 June 2011, at 08.30 AM, I was on a regular birdwatching sojourn at Madayipara. It was a sunny day, after about three weeks of heavy rainfall. A brown and black bird with thick yellow legs, large slightly up-curved beak and typical 'goggle' eyes was seen among a group of Red-wattled Lapwings. The bird looked similar to Stone-Curlew, but was larger. Though feeding on the ground, it was quite wary and hid behind the boulders when it sensed being watched. The species was identified as Great Stone-Plover



with the help of field guides.

I returned to the Madayipara at 04.00 PM in the evening of the same day with C. Sunilkumar, (*Mathrubhoomi*, Kannur). We found the bird at the same spot and Sunil could take some good photographs. We followed the movements of the bird for about one and a half hours. It was repeatedly being mobbed by a group of noisy crows.

I visited Madayipara the next day and at least ten more times after that in June and July and searched for the bird, but it had disappeared from the area as mysteriously as it had appeared.

Great Stone-Plover is a rare straggler as far as Kerala is concerned. There was a sighting of this species at Pudukkottai (Eranakulam district) and another unconfirmed report at Kadalundi estuary, both in the early 1990s (Sashikumar *et al.* 2011, *Birds of Kerala – Status and Distribution*, D C Books). It is an uncommon resident in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

Ten new species of frogs discovered from Western Ghats

As many as ten previously unknown species of frog from the family Rhacophoridae have been described in the forests of southern Western Ghats according to the paper published in the latest issue of the *Journal Biosystematica*, an international journal on animal taxonomy, ecology and zoogeography. Of the ten species, nine species have been identified in the group of bush frogs from the genus *Raorchestes* and one from the group of tree frogs representing the genus *Polypedates*.

The rare discovery is the result of five years of extensive field surveys by the scientists of Zoological Survey of India, Western Ghat Regional

Centre, Kozhikode with the researchers of Malabar Natural History Society and Travancore Natural History Society under the leadership of Dr Anil Zachariah of Wayanad. The Western Ghats region is considered as a global biodiversity hotspot for its species richness. The discovery shows that the Western Ghats still has many new species of amphibians waiting to be discovered.

The find includes a canopy frog species- *Raorchestes crustai*; two reed associated bush frog species- *R. manohari* and *R. uthamani*; 6 species of true bush frogs- *R. agsthyaensis*, *R. johnceei*, *R. kadalaensis*, *R. ravii*, *R. theuerkaufi*